

# CELLINI CLASSIC – A CLOSER LOOK



[HTTP://WWW.BELLABARISTA.CO.UK](http://www.bellabarista.co.uk)

## Overview

The Cellini Classic arrives well packed (Rocket Espresso use heavy grade packaging and Bella Barista also double box the machines). The build quality is good with high quality (industry standard) components and a good fit and finish. Constructed using a brushed steel outer case and chrome plated steel front panel, with a black painted steel frame **inside**. The quality is noticeable when lifting the machine as the Cellini Classic is a heavy machine for its size.

This type of heat Exchanger (HX) machine internally, is slightly more complex than cheaper non HX machines, but much simpler to operate. There are fewer controls and no need to do anything special (apart from filling the water tank occasionally) to draw steam, hot water or espresso at any time. The Cellini Classic automatically maintains the water level in the boiler as required and if run low on water in the tank the Cellini Classic switches off the heating element as a safety precaution, **and the power light flashes (low water alarm)**.

The machine is attractive and fits comfortably under standard height kitchen cabinets. The Cellini Classic compares favourably with other similar prosumer machines that have a heritage and reputation for looking good.

Some coffee enthusiasts buy second hand commercial machines that are very large and heavy, plumbed into the mains and with 3–6kw heating elements in 5 litre or larger boilers to make quality beverages at home. The Cellini Classic can make the same high quality drinks, without the hassle.

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The details were correct at the time of writing, but the manufacturer and Bella Barista reserve the right to change the technical specification of the packaging, machines and any accessories supplied with the machine (including quantity and type of accessories supplied)

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Rocket Espresso Cellini Classic closer look v1.doc

## Overview – cont.

The Cellini Classic went out of production some time ago and has been reborn under the care of Rocket Espresso. A legend, built again, to the same standards, in the same way as before. The Cellini is a great machine both for the customer to use and the reseller to support. It will provide years of reliable service with the minimum of maintenance. Once in position on the counter the machine looks nice and does not dominate on a standard sized work surface. The height of the machine is very convenient and gives plenty of room under standard height kitchen cupboards. It has a nice large cup warming tray. Placing the Cellini Classic in a corner is ideal, especially when located near the sink.

The Cellini Classic comes well packed, in a tough box and with comprehensive documentation covering all aspects of operation, routine maintenance and production of espresso based drinks. A valuable addition to the Italian manufacturer's written User guide that comes free with the Cellini Classic.



*Very well packed inner box, protected by double packing in an air-cell filled outer by Bella Barista*

Even if you are completely new to coffee making and this type of machine, you will have no problem making all those great coffee drinks in a very short time. The Cellini Classic is easy to keep clean, a quick wipe with a damp cloth and a buff with a micro fibre cloth is all that's required to keep it looking great. The more complex tasks such as backflushing and descaling are actually very easy to do and the supplied Bella Barista user guide explains how to do them in detail.

*The Cellini Classic, in the corner of my kitchen*



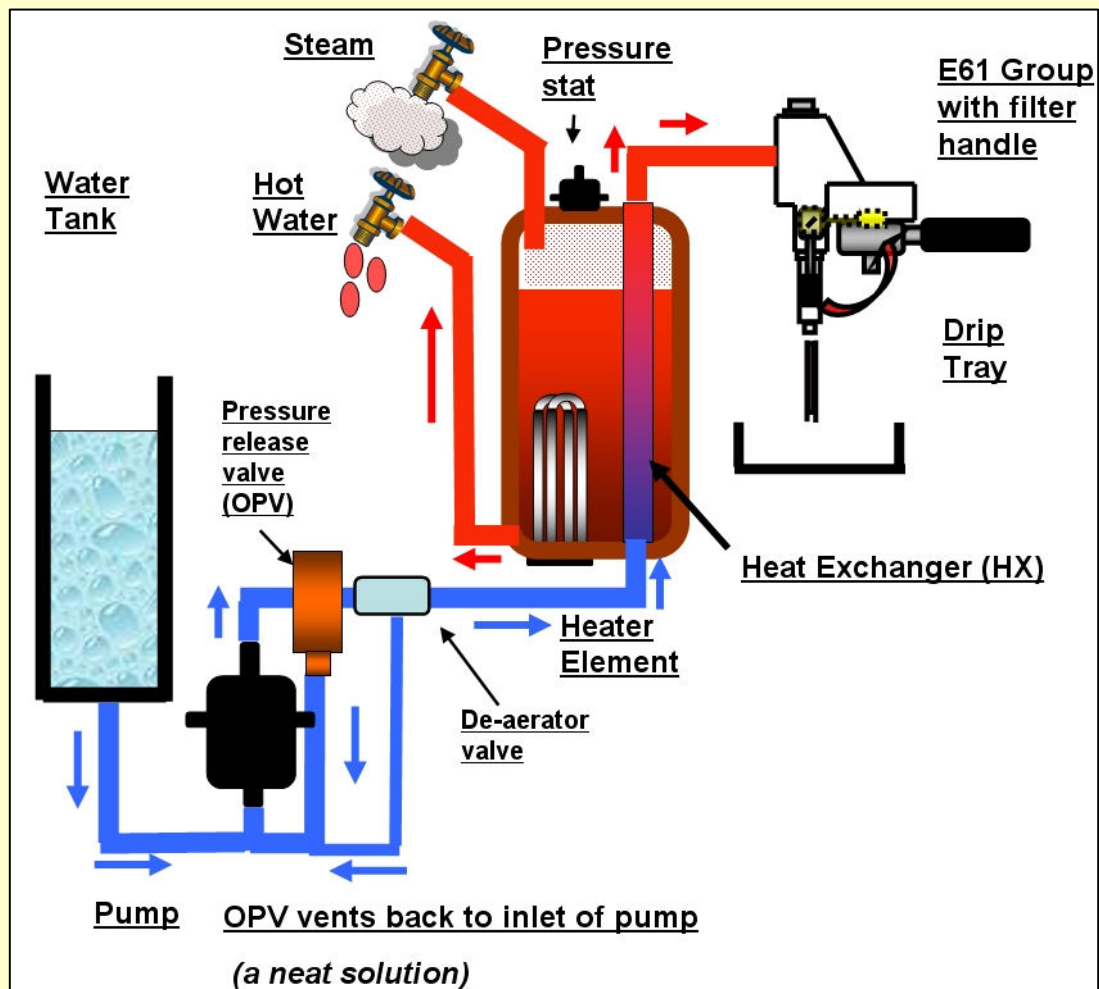
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## How it works



The diagram shows a simplified diagram of the Cellini. An upright boiler machine is shown, but the principle is identical for the horizontal mounted boiler of the Cellini. The pump keeps the boiler about 60% filled with water that is heated and kept at a pressure of 1.3–1.4 bar (about 22 psi). The temperature of this water is above boiling point and has an area of steam above (similar to a pressure cooker).

### Steam

The pipe for the steam wand is at the top of the boiler (in the steam area) as the steam tap is opened, steam is forced through the steam pipe and as the pressure drops more of the water instantly flashes to steam, giving a continuous supply.

### Hot Water

The pipe for the hot water tap is submerged below the waterline in the boiler. As the hot water tap is opened, steam pressure forces the hot water from the boiler through the pipe and out of the hot water outlet.

### Coffee Brew Water

Coffee brew water for the group does not actually come from the water in the boiler, but is pumped directly from the tank through a "heat exchanger" (essentially, a big copper tube) that passes through the hot boiler. As the cold water from the water tank passes through this tube it is heated to the correct temperature for brewing coffee.

Lifting the lever starts the pumping of brew water, lowering the lever stops the pump and additionally

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## Inside the Cellini Classic

A close inspection of the Cellini Classic shows a machine that has all the usual refinements internally that one would expect. Internal build quality is good, with great attention to detail. Components are well positioned, neatly assembled; all cables are well away from hot spots and comprehensively tied to avoid movement.

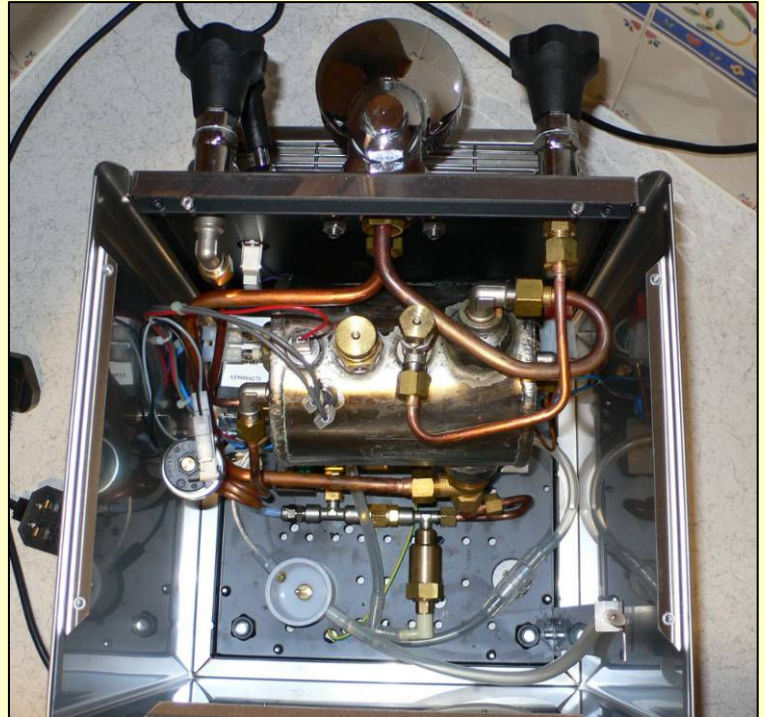
Some internal shots below;



*The vibe pump tucked under the boiler*



*Clever managements of the tanked water supply*



*The powerhouse of the machine accessible from the top, with the removal of only 4 screws near each corner*



*Removal of the outer case, gives easy access to all components, e.g. heating element.*

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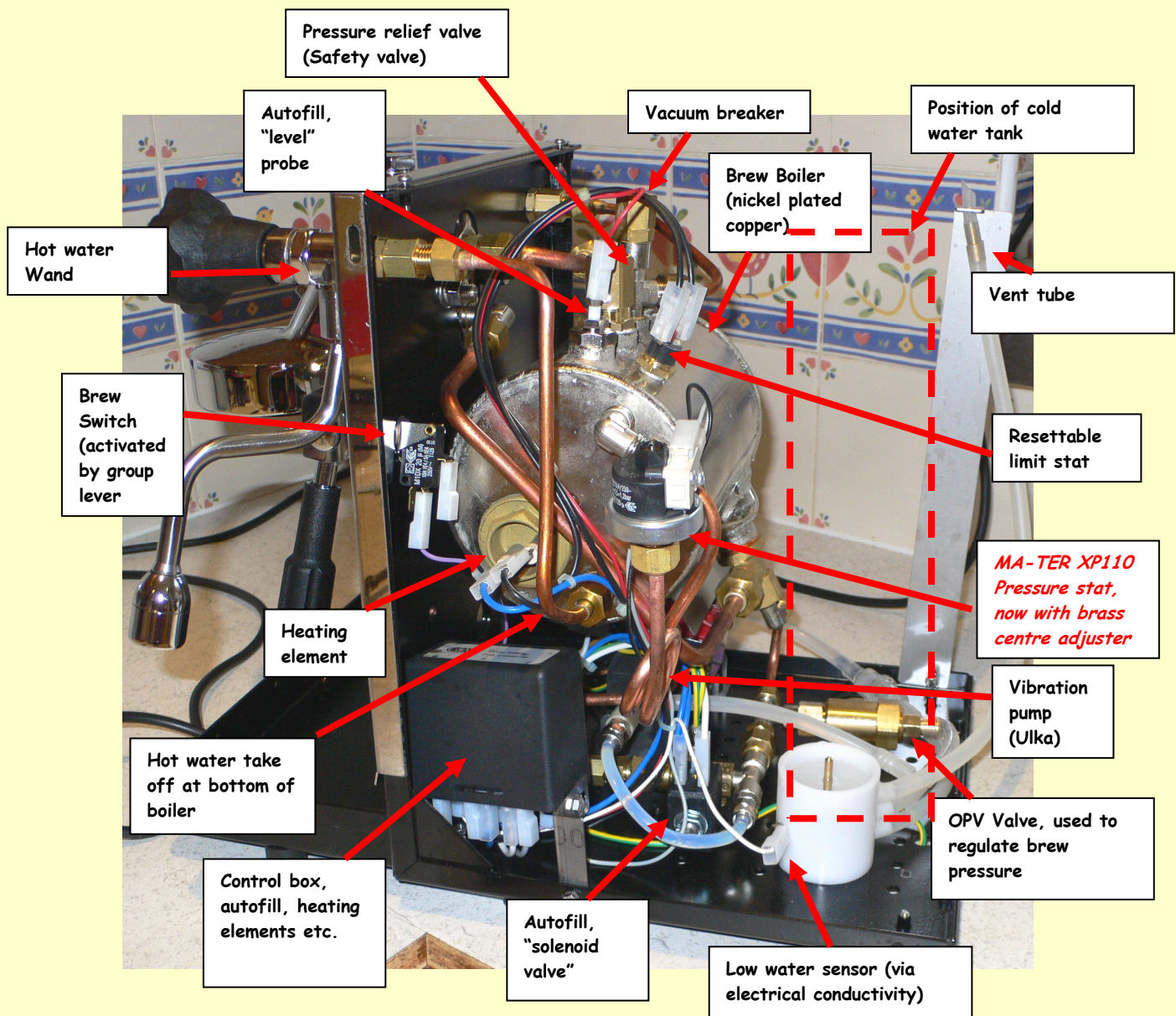
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## A detailed Tour



The picture above identifies the major components of the machine, once the case is removed accessibility for maintenance is good. Full removal/refitting of the case is moderately time consuming

This machine would be fairly simple to work on for most of the major components requiring replacement over time.

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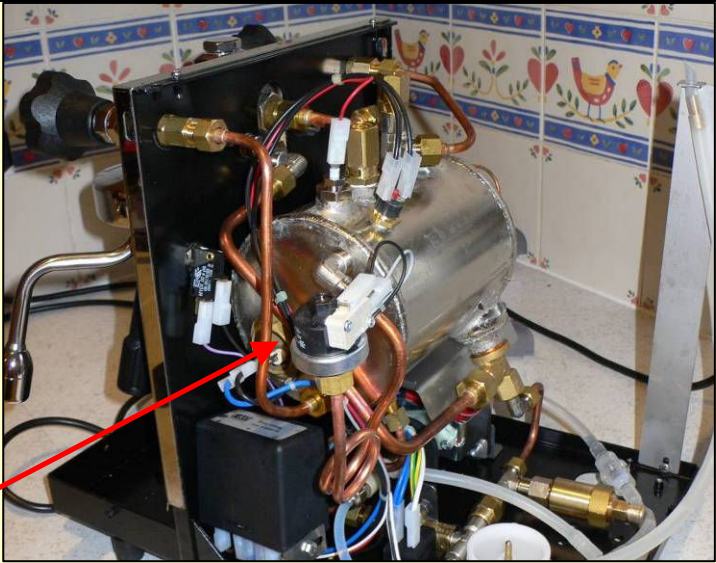
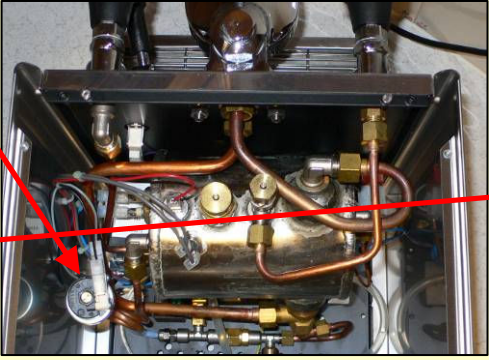

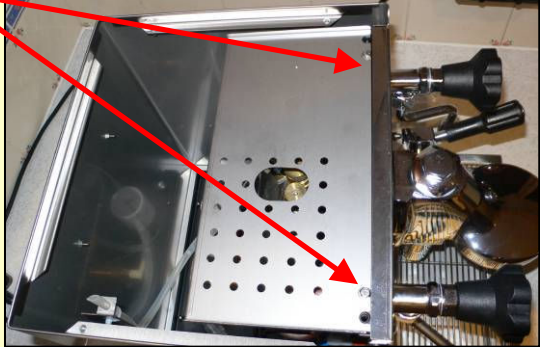
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## Key Features

- Ball Joint steam and water arms (no burn)
- Nice quality internal water tank
- “Clever” low water sensor and tanked water supply mechanism
- “non compression” steam & water valves
- “No burn” steam and water valves
- Adjustable pressure stat.
- Attractive retro design and brushed steel case
- 2 heavy weight quality portafilter holders and 2 filter baskets as standard
- Height adjustable feet

Item/Description	Picture	Comments
Chromed Steel external case with plenty of room for internal components to stay cool. The case is a good fit, but does require care during removal and refitting. Access to some components is quickly achieved from the top via removal of 4 screws. These screws are found under the polycarbonate cup tray surround in small recesses. More involved maintenance requires case removal, which is moderately time consuming		
Good routing of internal cables and pipes, avoiding hot spots and areas of vibration scuffing.		
Nice quality nickel plated boiler with good brazing and thick brass endplates		
High quality internal components		
All components quite accessible. This makes servicing easy	 	
Very accessible pressure stat that is not too sensitive to adjust. This makes pressure adjustment extremely easy and can be adjusted without removing the entire case, just the water tank carrier needs to be removed (4 screws).		
Note the internal cover plate simply has to have the two screws loosened and slid out of position prior to adjustment.		
		

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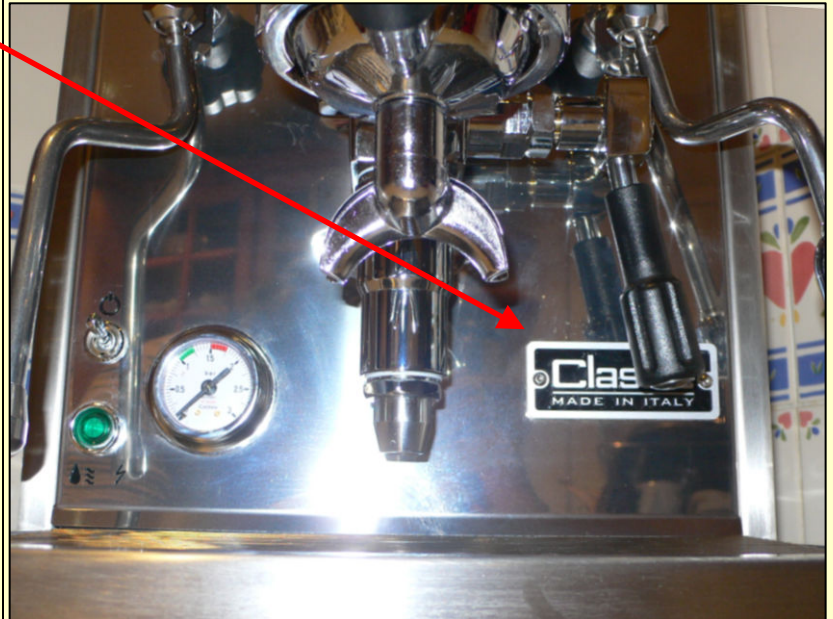
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A nice quality badge. For a change a machine with a badge that actually is in keeping with it's value.

It is even riveted in place, which means it won't fall off....something that occasionally happens on some espresso machines with constant exposure to heat and steam. Readers of past reviews will know that I am not a fan of cheap badges, especially when stuck on, or even worse, not level.

The steam pressure gauge is clear and easy to read, it's also on straight and not crooked!



Nice quality cold water tank holding 3 litres and simply slots in the top, no tubes to worry about. Refilling can be done with the tank in or out of the machine and there is a handy access hatch for filling.



Nice large cup warming tray. You can get plenty of cups on there, definitely no lack of space. The little hatch for refilling means you don't have to remove every cup.

*Please note: I have not removed the protective polythene covering of the polycarbonate cup tray surround as this is not my machines. It is an attractive transparent smoked effect similar to glass.*



The Cellini Classic is heavy, because the internal frame is rigid and constructed with a quality (thick) steel

**The feet are height adjustable unlike some of the other models.**

**The machine is heavy and difficult to slide around. You will want to slide it around to refill it if it is under cupboards.**

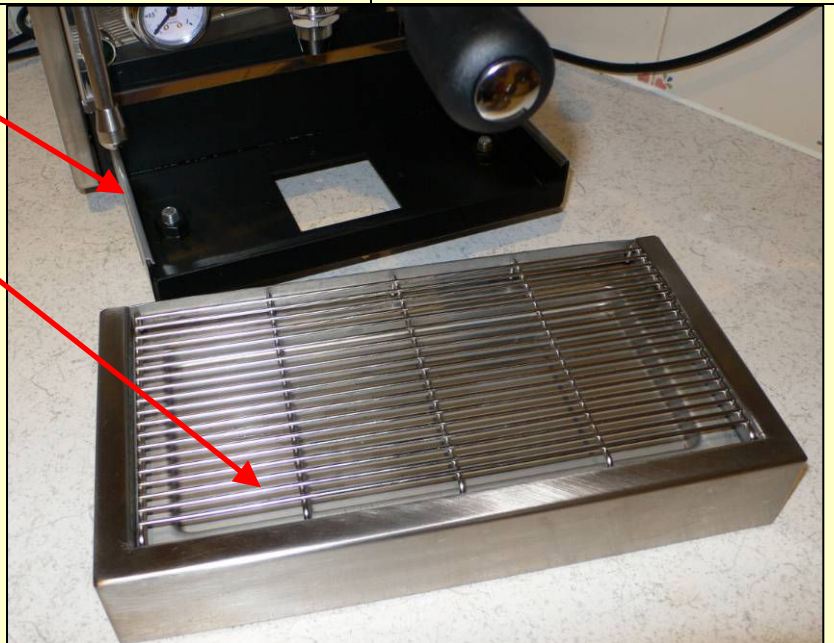


I strongly recommend the use of felt bottomed (or Teflon faced) castor cups for a few pounds, to make it easy to move and protect your worktop. You could also stick felt/teflon pads directly to the bottom of the feet

The frame now has some plastic strips added to cushion against vibration

The drip tray is not the largest I have seen and holds around 250-300ml before it needs emptying (it can hold more but you will spill liquid whilst trying to empty it).

It is all steel and nice quality with the same brushed finish as the main case..





**At the default factory settings**, the Cellini is a moderate steamer and steam power can reduce when foaming larger quantities of milk with it's 2 hole tip. It took some practice to microfoam smaller quantities of milk, to the texture I like (aprox 100-120ml) and would certainly be easier with a single hole tip or one with smaller holes if you want to run at the factory default 0.8-1.0 bar steam boiler pressure.

***I have recommended to Bella Barista that these machines are set to a 1.2-1.3 bar steam boiler pressure for better steaming....the only disadvantage will be a slightly larger cooling flush prior to pulling a shot (but this is the same for other prosumer HX machines). The thermal dynamics of any machine with a similar specification (and quite common combination of: 1200W element, 1,8l horizontal boiler and similar steam tip hole size, will not steam properly with the pressures set at 0.8-1.0 bar***

Professional quality no compression steam valve and ball joint “no burn” steam wand. It was also long enough to reach to the bottom of all my smaller pitchers.



I like the ball-joint mounted steam and hot water arms, both of which are “no burn”. I also like the large knobs with “non-compression valves”, much more tactile and look good too.

**“No Burn”** – a wand with an airspace preventing the walls from heating up when water (or steam) is drawn. However even these wands do eventually get hot...BUT cleaning the milk from the steam wand is MUCH easier.

**“non compression” valves** - use a spring and seal to seat. Opening the valve typically “pushes” the sprung seal open, closing simply allows the spring to close the valve, there is no **“compression”** of a washer as in some taps. Commonly found in the commercial environment, because the seals cannot be damaged by “ham-fisted” operators closing them too tightly.



The equipment supplied with the Cellini:  
The review machine had 2 portafilter holders (good quality) with single and double baskets, measuring scoop, backflushing blind filter basket, steel cleaning cloth and the usual plastic tamper (useless).

Portafilters are heavyweight, very nice quality and finished off with a chrome button in the end of the handle.

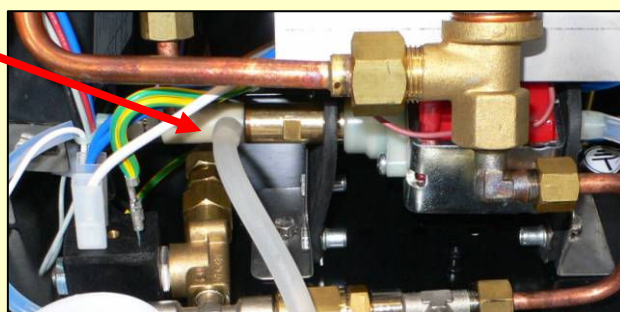


The machine switches off the heating element when low on water, the boiler then goes cold and the pump will not run. However, there is NO audible low water alarm, just 2 visible indications that the machine is off: A flashing green power light and a slowly decending boiler pressure gauge..

**I really think that in a machine of this value, an audible alarm should be added. It can be very irritating to go to make a coffee only to find that the machine switched off the heating element an hour ago (perhaps due to a boiler autofill after you leave the kitchen) and then have to wait 20 minutes or more for it to warm up.**

It was nice to see a De-Aerator fitted to a machine as these seem to have gone out of fashion in recent years (it's certainly cheaper for the manufacturer to omit them!). This device simply bleeds air from the outlet side of the pump, this prevents air in the system causing the OPV valve to screech

**I believe the reason for OPVs screeching, is air in the brew line, this is often caused by scale (the reasons for this are beyond the scope of this review). However, the fitting of a de-aerator can only be helpful should air enter the brew line for whatever reason.**





## Using the Cellini Classic – simple and easy to use!

The Cellini Classic runs hot, which is usual with all prosumer Heat Exchanger (HX) machines. This is because of the tight compromise between continuously available steam, and production of brew water for espresso. The pressure in the boiler is directly related to the temperature, a higher pressure gives higher temperatures. Because of the way HX machines work most require a cooling flush prior to drawing the first in a series of espressos, the Cellini Classic in common with other machines of this type also requires this “cooling flush”. However, I felt the Cellini did not need as large a cooling flush as many HX machines when at the factory setting of 0.8–1.0 bar, unfortunately this was insufficient for proper steaming and at my recommended setting of 1.2 to 1.3 bar a normal sized cooling flush is required..

### Pressure Settings

You can alter the pressure/temperature of the boiler if required via the pressure stat and the machines own boiler pressure gauge allows you to see the settings. Brew pressure can be altered by adjustment of the expansion valve, but as the Cellini has no brew pressure gauge, you will need to use portafilter pressure gauge when adjusting brew pressures as part of your annual maintenance routine. The brew pressure on the test machine was around 10.8 bar, this is OK although it could easily be adjusted to around 9 or 10 bar (the good quality OPV/expansion valve, is quite adjustable). Just remember to allow for the thermal expansion of water when measuring pressure in this way. See <http://coffeetime.wikidot.com/pressure-measuring-portafilters>

### Espresso

As long as a cooling flush is performed, the Cellini Classic makes consistently good espressos and easily maintains the temperature during the pour. Domestic volumes of espresso one after another will be no problem using the Cellini

### Hot Water

It's nice to have really hot water on tap, recovery time after drawing hot water for an Americano is very fast. Although I always recommend a kettle for regular hot water production, especially in areas where lime scale is a problem and saves having to descale your machine so often.

### The E61 group

The E61 group is an industry standard (as are many of the components in the machine), so parts such as, pumps, gaskets, shower screens, filter holders, filter holder handles etc. are all a standard size and readily available from multiple suppliers. This also means that the pricing of these spares is highly competitive.

### Steam Production

The Cellini has moderate steam performance and in my opinion the boiler pressure needs to be raised to get suitable steaming performance. This should be done by Bella Barista prior to you receiving the machine, if not, I would recommend a setting of 1.2–1.3 bar.

## Final Thoughts – so what's the bottom line!

This was an opportunity to review a machine that has been “reborn”. The Cellini Classic is being produced to the same plans and standard as before. The Cellini Classic was always considered a very good machine and certainly nothing has changed. It's well made and nice quality.

It definitely holds its own against other similar machines and is one decent machine. **I have had my machine on test for nearly 4 weeks and it has performed flawlessly. The reason for such an extended test is Bella Baristas wish to make the Cellini a core offering within their heat exchanger range of vibration pump machines...**not only bridging the gap between the higher end Giotto, but also the rotary pumped HX machines. In addition the clean lines and brushed steel finish of this machine may suit people who do not want the angles and chrome finish of the Giotto

It's heavy at around 23kg, but not too large, although slightly deeper than some machines. It's also not too tall and I do prefer machines that are a little more balanced in this way. A commercial 1 group (that would make similar beverages), would be significantly bigger, heavier and overkill for the home user.

## Anything you would change?

As a reviewer, with my 20/20 hindsight, there were a few things, especially considering the price of the machine.

- A audible low water alarm
- A brew pressure gauge as well, or if space is limited a dual pressure gauge (one dial for boiler pressure one for brew pressure).

But these are minor items on a machine that has many admirers and do little to detract from its day to day operation.

## Conclusions

There are people who are going to love the looks of the Cellini and as a lifestyle choice (for some), nothing else will do. It makes a statement, without dominating the setting it's placed within and performs as well (or better) than other similar machines in the prosumer category.

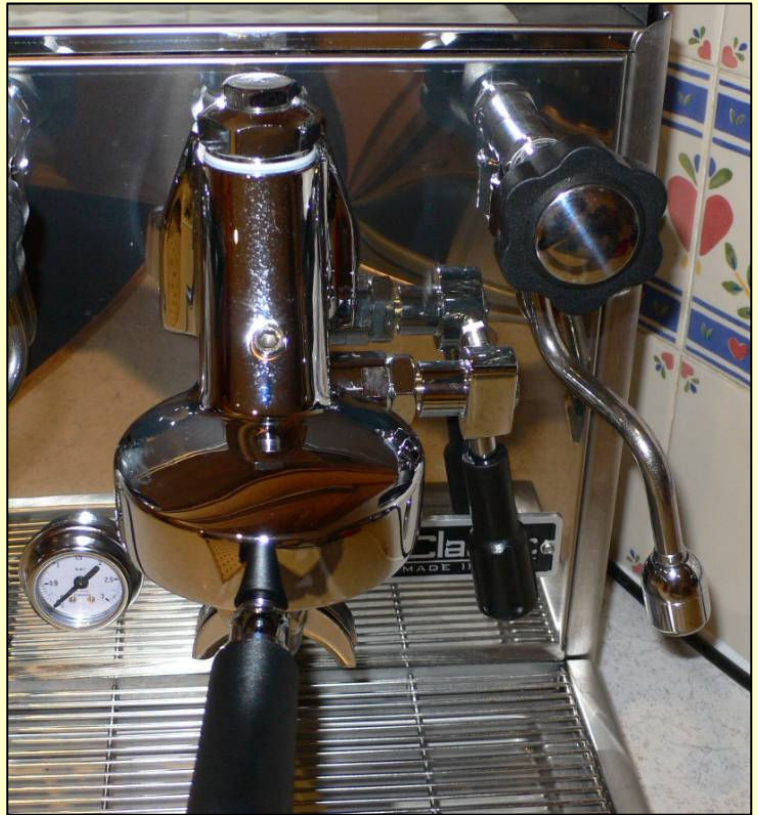
Its vibration pump is quiet in comparison to most vibration pumped machines on the market. The overall quality of the machine (and components used) is very good and sits in the higher end of the prosumer machine category. Water refilling/management is easier than on some machines. Detection of low water level is excellent (and reliable) and the entire tank is used before the machine switches off the heating element (and pump). The particular water system used on these machines also allows the use of a very large 2.9l water tank, a big plus.

The Cellini Classic is a great machine, with great retro styling, that any owner would, and should be proud of. **It's good!**



## Gallery – A few more pictures of the Cellini Classic

*2 high quality  
group handles,  
with single,  
double and blind  
baskets*



*The beautiful lever operated E61 group, just  
waiting to make that espresso or latte!*



*Removing only the top panel gives  
reasonable access and takes a minute,  
removing the case takes a little longer and  
gives very good access for maintenance*



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